United Nations A/66/425

General Assembly

Distr.: General
8 November 2011

Original: English

Sixty-sixth session
Agenda item 51

International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space

Report of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee)

Rapporteur: Mr. Hasan **Abulhasan** (Kuwait)

I. Introduction

1. At its 2nd plenary meeting, on 16 September 2011, the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the General Committee, decided to include in the agenda of its sixty-sixth session the item entitled "International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space" and to allocate it to the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee).

2. The Fourth Committee considered the item at its 7th, 8th, 9th and 10th meetings, on 11, 12, 13 and 18 October 2011 (see A/C.4/66/SR.7-10).

3. For its consideration of the item, the Committee had before it the report of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (A/66/20).

4. At its 1st meeting, on 29 September, the Committee decided to establish a Working Group of the Whole on international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space, to be chaired by the delegation of Romania, to prepare proposals to be submitted under the item.

5. At the 7th meeting, on 11 October, in a panel discussion on the theme "the contribution of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, 'Rio+20', presentations were made by Dumitru-Dorin Prunariu (Romania), in his capacity as Chair of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space; Kenneth Hodgkins (United States of America) and Gilberto Camara (Brazil); as well as by representatives of the Office of Information and Communications Technology and the Office for Outer Space Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat (see A/C.4/66/SR.7).

6. At the same meeting, the Chair of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space introduced the report of that Committee (see A/C.4/66/SR.7).

Please recycle

II. Consideration of draft resolution A/C.4/66/L.2/Rev.1

7. At its 10th meeting, on 18 October, the Committee had before it a draft resolution entitled "International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space" (A/C.4/66/L.2/Rev.1), submitted by Romania in its capacity as Chair of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space.

8. At the same meeting, the representative of Romania, in her capacity as representative of the Chair of the Working Group of the Whole, introduced the draft resolution.

9. Also at the same meeting, the Committee was informed that there were no programme budget implications relating to the draft resolution.

10. Also at its 10th meeting, the Committee adopted draft resolution A/C.4/66/L.2/Rev.1 without a vote (see para. 11).

III. Recommendation of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee)

11. The Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolution:

International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 51/122 of 13 December 1996, 54/68 of 6 December 1999, 59/2 of 20 October 2004, 61/110 and 61/111 of 14 December 2006, 62/101 of 17 December 2007, 62/217 of 22 December 2007, 65/97 of 10 December 2010 and 65/271 of 7 April 2011,

Recognizing the extraordinary achievements made over the past fifty years in human space flight and space exploration for peaceful purposes, and recalling the unique platform at the global level for international cooperation in space activities represented by the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space,

Deeply convinced of the common interest of mankind in promoting and expanding the exploration and use of outer space, as the province of all mankind, for peaceful purposes and in continuing efforts to extend to all States the benefits derived therefrom, and also of the importance of international cooperation in this field, for which the United Nations should continue to provide a focal point,

Reaffirming the importance of international cooperation in developing the rule of law, including the relevant norms of space law and their important role in international cooperation for the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes, and of the widest possible adherence to international treaties that promote the peaceful uses of outer space in order to meet emerging new challenges, especially for developing countries,

Seriously concerned about the possibility of an arms race in outer space, and bearing in mind the importance of article IV of the Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies[1] (Outer Space Treaty),

Recognizing that all States, in particular those with major space capabilities, should contribute actively to the goal of preventing an arms race in outer space as an essential condition for the promotion and strengthening of international cooperation in the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes,

Recognizing also that space debris is an issue of concern to all nations,

Noting the progress achieved in the further development of peaceful space exploration and applications as well as in various national and cooperative space projects, which contributes to international cooperation, and the importance of further developing the legal framework to strengthen international cooperation in this field,

[1] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 610, No. 8843.

Convinced of the need to promote the use of space technology towards implementing the United Nations Millennium Declaration,[2]

Seriously concerned about the devastating impact of disasters,[3]

Desirous of enhancing international coordination and cooperation at the global level in disaster management and emergency response through greater access to and use of space-based services for all countries and facilitating capacity-building and institutional strengthening for disaster management, in particular in developing countries,

Deeply convinced that the use of space science and technology and their applications in areas such as telehealth, tele-education, disaster management, environmental protection and other Earth observation applications contribute to achieving the objectives of the global conferences of the United Nations that address various aspects of economic, social and cultural development, particularly poverty eradication,

Taking note, in that regard, of the fact that the 2005 World Summit recognized the important role that science and technology play in promoting sustainable development,[4]

Having considered the report of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space on the work of its fifty-fourth session,[5]

1. *Endorses* the report of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space on the work of its fifty-fourth session;[5]

2. *Agrees* that the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, at its fifty-fifth session, should consider the substantive items recommended by the Committee at its fifty-fourth session,[6] taking into account the concerns of all countries, in particular those of developing countries;

3. *Notes* that, at its fiftieth session, the Legal Subcommittee of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space continued its work,[7] as mandated by the General Assembly in its resolution 65/97;

4. *Agrees* that the Legal Subcommittee, at its fifty-first session, should consider the substantive items and reconvene the working groups recommended by the Committee,[8] taking into account the concerns of all countries, in particular those of developing countries;

---

[2] See resolution 55/2.

[3] The term "disasters" refers to natural or technological disasters.

[4] See resolution 60/1, para. 60.

[5] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 20* (A/66/20).

[6] Ibid., para. 304.

[7] Ibid., chap. II.D; and A/AC.105/990.

[8] See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 20* (A/66/20), paras. 215-218.

5. *Urges* States that have not yet become parties to the international treaties governing the uses of outer space[9] to give consideration to ratifying or acceding to those treaties in accordance with their domestic law, as well as incorporating them in their national legislation;

6. *Notes* that, at its forty-eighth session, the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space continued its work,[10] as mandated by the General Assembly in its resolution 65/97;

7. *Agrees* that the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, at its forty-ninth session, should consider the substantive items and reconvene the working groups recommended by the Committee,[11] taking into account the concerns of all countries, in particular those of developing countries;

8. *Notes with appreciation* that some States are already implementing space debris mitigation measures on a voluntary basis, through national mechanisms and consistent with the Space Debris Mitigation Guidelines of the Inter-Agency Space Debris Coordination Committee and with the Space Debris Mitigation Guidelines of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space,[12] endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 62/217;

9. *Invites* other States to implement, through relevant national mechanisms, the Space Debris Mitigation Guidelines of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space;[12]

10. *Considers* that it is essential that States pay more attention to the problem of collisions of space objects, including those with nuclear power sources, with space debris, and other aspects of space debris, calls for the continuation of national research on this question, for the development of improved technology for the monitoring of space debris and for the compilation and dissemination of data on space debris, also considers that, to the extent possible, information thereon should be provided to the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, and agrees that international cooperation is needed to expand appropriate and affordable strategies to minimize the impact of space debris on future space missions;

11. *Urges* all States, in particular those with major space capabilities, to contribute actively to the goal of preventing an arms race in outer space as an essential condition for the promotion of international cooperation in the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes;

---

[9] Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies (United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 610, No. 8843); Agreement on the Rescue of Astronauts, the Return of Astronauts and the Return of Objects Launched into Outer Space (United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 672, No. 9574); Convention on International Liability for Damage Caused by Space Objects (United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 961, No. 13810); Convention on Registration of Objects Launched into Outer Space (United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1023, No. 15020); and Agreement Governing the Activities of States on the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies (United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1363, No. 23002).

[10] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 20* (A/66/20), chap. II.C; and A/AC.105/987.

[11] See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 20* (A/66/20), paras. 164-167.

[12] Ibid., *Sixty-second Session, Supplement No. 20* (A/62/20), paras. 117 and 118, and annex.

12. *Endorses* the United Nations Programme on Space Applications for 2012, as proposed to the Committee by the Expert on Space Applications and endorsed by the Committee;[13]

13. *Welcomes* the continuous progress made by the International Committee on Global Navigation Satellite Systems towards achieving compatibility and interoperability among global and regional space-based positioning, navigation and timing systems and in the promotion of the use of global navigation satellite systems and their integration into national infrastructure, particularly in developing countries, and notes with satisfaction that the International Committee held its sixth meeting in Tokyo from 5 to 9 September 2011;

14. *Notes with satisfaction* the progress made within the framework of the United Nations Platform for Space-based Information for Disaster Management and Emergency Response (UN-SPIDER) in the implementation of the workplan of the UN-SPIDER programme for the biennium 2010-2011,[14] and encourages Member States to provide, on a voluntary basis, the programme with the necessary additional resources to ensure that greater support could be provided to Member States by UN-SPIDER and its regional support offices;

15. *Notes with appreciation* that the African regional centres for space science and technology education in the French and English languages, located in Morocco and Nigeria, respectively, as well as the Centre for Space Science and Technology Education in Asia and the Pacific and the Regional Centre for Space Science and Technology Education for Latin America and the Caribbean, affiliated to the United Nations, have continued their education programmes in 2011, and agrees that the regional centres should continue to report to the Committee on their activities;

16. *Emphasizes* that regional and interregional cooperation in the field of space activities is essential to strengthen the peaceful uses of outer space, assist States in the development of their space capabilities and contribute to the achievement of the goals of the United Nations Millennium Declaration[2] and to that end requests relevant regional organizations to offer the assistance necessary so that countries can carry out recommendations of regional conferences;

17. *Recognizes*, in this regard, the important role played by conferences and other mechanisms in strengthening regional and international cooperation among States, such as the African Leadership Conference on Space Science and Technology for Sustainable Development, the Asia-Pacific Regional Space Agency Forum, the Asia-Pacific Space Cooperation Organization and the Space Conference of the Americas;

18. *Notes with satisfaction* that the Sixth Space Conference of the Americas was hosted by the Government of Mexico and held in Pachuca, Mexico, from 15 to 19 November 2010, welcomes the adoption of the Pachuca Declaration, and also notes with satisfaction that the Government of Mexico has assumed the pro tempore secretariat of the Conference for the period 2011-2013; that the fourth meeting of the Council of the Asia-Pacific Space Cooperation Organization was held in Pattaya, Thailand, on 26 and 27 January 2011; that the Fourth African Leadership

[13] Ibid., *Sixty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 20* (A/66/20), para. 80; and A/AC.105/980, sects. II and III and annex III.

[14] See A/AC.105/937.

Conference on Space Science and Technology for Sustainable Development was hosted by the Government of Kenya and held in Mombasa, Kenya, from 26 to 28 September 2011; and that the eighteenth session of the Asia-Pacific Regional Space Agency Forum will be jointly organized by the Singapore Space and Technology Association, the National University of Singapore and the Government of Japan and held in Singapore from 6 to 9 December 2011;

19. *Requests* the Committee to continue to consider, as a matter of priority, ways and means of maintaining outer space for peaceful purposes and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its sixty-seventh session, and agrees that during its consideration of the matter the Committee could continue to consider ways to promote regional and interregional cooperation and the role space technology could play in the implementation of recommendations of the World Summit on Sustainable Development;

20. *Recognizes* that space science and technology and their applications make important contributions to economic, social and cultural development and welfare, as indicated in the resolution entitled "The Space Millennium: Vienna Declaration on Space and Human Development",[15] and its resolution 59/2, and notes with satisfaction that a number of the recommendations set out in the Plan of Action of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space on the implementation of the recommendations of the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE III)[16] have been implemented and that satisfactory progress is being made in implementing the outstanding recommendations through national and regional activities;

21. *Urges* all Member States to continue to contribute to the Trust Fund for the United Nations Programme on Space Applications to enhance the capacity of the Office for Outer Space Affairs of the Secretariat to provide technical and legal advisory services in accordance with the Plan of Action, while maintaining the priority thematic areas agreed by the Committee;

22. *Emphasizes* the need to increase the benefits of space technology and its applications and to contribute to an orderly growth of space activities favourable to sustained economic growth and sustainable development in all countries, including mitigation of the consequences of disasters, in particular in developing countries;

23. *Reiterates* that the benefits of space technology and its applications should continue to be brought to the attention, in particular, of the major United Nations conferences and summits for economic, social and cultural development and related fields and that the use of space technology should be promoted towards achieving the objectives of those conferences and summits and for implementing the United Nations Millennium Declaration;

24. *Welcomes* the increased efforts to strengthen further the Inter-Agency Meeting on Outer Space Activities and urges entities of the United Nations system, particularly those participating in the Inter-Agency Meeting, to continue to examine, in cooperation with the Committee, how space science and technology and their applications could contribute to implementing the United Nations Millennium

[15] See *Report of the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, Vienna, 19-30 July 1999* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.00.I.3), chap. I, resolution 1.

[16] See A/59/174, sect. VI.B.

Declaration on the development agenda, particularly in the areas relating to, inter alia, food security and increasing opportunities for education;

25. *Calls upon* the United Nations University and other institutions of the same nature, within the framework of their mandates, to provide training and to carry out research in the areas of international space law and, in particular, matters relating to disasters and emergencies;

26. *Agrees* that the Committee and its subsidiary bodies at their respective sessions in 2012 should elect their officers nominated for the period 2012-2013;[17]

27. *Decides* that Azerbaijan shall become a member of the Committee;[18]

28. *Endorses* the decision of the Committee to grant permanent observer status to the Association of Remote Sensing Centres in the Arab World;[19]

29. *Notes* that each of the regional groups has the responsibility for actively promoting the participation in the work of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies of the States members of the Committee that are also members of the respective regional groups, and agrees that the regional groups should consider this Committee-related matter among their members;

30. *Notes with satisfaction* that a panel discussion was held at United Nations Headquarters on 11 October 2011 on the topic of the contribution of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development,[20] to be held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 2012, with attention given to the use of space-derived geospatial data for sustainable development and taking into account the previous panel discussions held on climate change, food security, global health and emergencies;

31. *Invites* the Group on Earth Observations to contribute to the preparatory process for the 2012 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development by addressing issues related to the use of space-derived geospatial data for sustainable development;

32. *Requests* the entities of the United Nations system, other international organizations and the Secretary-General to continue and, where appropriate, to enhance their cooperation with the Committee and to provide it with reports on the issues dealt with in the work of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies, and to address the issues covered by the panel discussions held in conjunction with sessions of the General Assembly;

33. *Recalls* the fact that the General Assembly, by its resolution 65/271, declared 12 April the International Day of Human Space Flight;

34. *Notes with satisfaction* the commemorative segment of the fifty-fourth session of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space on the occasion of

---

[17] See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 20* (A/66/20), para. 286.

[18] Ibid., para. 290.

[19] Ibid., para. 292.

[20] See A/AC.105/993.

the fiftieth anniversary of human space flight and the fiftieth anniversary of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, held at Vienna on 1 June 2011;[21]

35. *Adopts* the Declaration on the Fiftieth Anniversary of Human Space Flight and the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, set forth in the annex to the present resolution.

[21] See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 20* (A/66/20), annex I.

Annex

Declaration on the Fiftieth Anniversary of Human Space Flight and the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space

We, the States Members of the United Nations, in commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of human space flight and the fiftieth anniversary of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space,

1. *Recall* the launch into outer space of the first human-made Earth satellite, Sputnik I, on 4 October 1957, thus opening the way for space exploration;

2. *Also recall* that, on 12 April 1961, Yuri Gagarin became the first human to orbit the Earth, opening a new chapter of human endeavour in outer space;

3. *Further recall* the amazing history of human presence in outer space and the remarkable achievements since the first human spaceflight, in particular Valentina Tereshkova becoming the first woman to orbit the Earth on 16 June 1963, Neil Armstrong becoming the first human to set foot upon the surface of the Moon on 20 July 1969, and the docking of the Apollo and Soyuz spacecrafts on 17 July 1975, being the first international human mission in space, and recall that for the past decade humanity has maintained a multinational permanent human presence in outer space aboard the International Space Station;

4. *Respectfully recall* that the human exploration of outer space has not been without sacrifice, and remember the men and women who have lost their lives in the pursuit of expanding humanity's frontiers;

5. *Emphasize* the significant progress in the development of space science and technology and their applications that has enabled humans to explore the universe, and the extraordinary achievements made over the past fifty years in space exploration efforts, including deepening the understanding of the planetary system and the Sun and the Earth itself, in the use of space science and technology for the benefit of all humankind and in the development of the international legal regime governing space activities;

6. *Recall* the entry into force of the Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies[1] (Outer Space Treaty) on 10 October 1967, which establishes the fundamental principles of international space law;

7. *Also recall* the first meeting of the permanent Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, convened on 27 November 1961, which facilitated the adoption of General Assembly resolutions 1721 A to E (XVI) of 20 December 1961, including resolution 1721 A (XVI), in which the first legal principles were commended to States for their guidance in space activities, and resolution 1721 B (XVI), in which the Assembly expressed its belief that the United Nations should provide a focal point for international cooperation in the peaceful exploration and use of outer space;

8. *Recognize* that the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, assisted by the Office for Outer Space Affairs of the Secretariat, has for the past fifty years served as a unique platform at the global level for international

cooperation in space activities and that the Committee and its subsidiary bodies stand at the forefront in bringing the world together in using space science and technology to preserve the Earth and the space environment and ensure the future of human civilization;

9. *Acknowledge* that significant changes have occurred in the structure and content of the space endeavour, as reflected in the emergence of new technologies and the increasing number of actors at all levels, and therefore note with satisfaction the progress made in strengthening international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space by enhancing the capacity of States for economic, social and cultural development and by strengthening the regulatory frameworks and mechanisms to that effect;

10. *Reaffirm* the importance of international cooperation in developing the rule of law, including the relevant norms of space law, and of the widest possible adherence to the international treaties that promote the peaceful uses of outer space;

11. *Express our firm conviction* that space science and technology and their applications, such as satellite communications, Earth observation systems and satellite navigation technologies, provide indispensable tools for viable long-term solutions for sustainable development and can contribute more effectively to efforts to promote the development of all countries and regions of the world, to improve people's lives, to conserve natural resources and to enhance the preparedness for and mitigation of the consequences of disasters;

12. *Express our deep concern* about the fragility of the space environment and the challenges to the long-term sustainability of outer space activities, in particular the impact of space debris;

13. *Stress* the need to look more closely into how advanced space research and exploration systems and technologies could further contribute to meeting challenges, including that of global climate change, and to food security and global health, and endeavour to examine how the outcomes and spin-offs of scientific research in human space flight could increase the benefits, in particular for developing countries;

14. *Emphasize* that regional and interregional cooperation in the field of space activities is essential to strengthen the peaceful uses of outer space, assist States in the development of their space capabilities and contribute to the achievement of the goals of the United Nations Millennium Declaration;[2]

15. *Confirm* the need for closer coordination between the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and other intergovernmental bodies involved in the global development agenda of the United Nations, including with respect to the major United Nations conferences and summits for economic, social and cultural development;

16. *Call upon* all States to take measures at the national, regional, interregional and global levels to engage in the common efforts to use space science and technology and their applications to preserve planet Earth and its space environment for future generations.